WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for allowing a viewer to purchase products shown in an entertainment program comprising:

means for storing in a database product information relating to a product shown in the entertainment program;

means for receiving from the viewer a request about the product shown in the entertainment program, the request containing a subset of the product information;

means for identifying the product information in the database using the subset of the product information; and

means for communicating to the viewer the identified information about the product.

2. The system according to claim 1, further comprising:

means for placing an order with a vendor for the product.

3. The system according to claim 1, wherein the identifying means includes:

a central processing unit.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the storing means includes:

program memory means for storing entertainment program information identifying a particular entertainment program in which a product was shown.

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5.   The system of claim 4, wherein the program memory means includes:

means for storing as entertainment program information, information about characters and a plot of the entertainment program.

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6.   The system of claim 1, wherein the storing means includes:

means for storing information identifying a portion of the entertainment program in which the product is shown.

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7.   The system of claim 6, wherein means for storing identifying information includes:

means for storing a count value that corresponds to the time the product was shown in the entertainment program.

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8.   A method for allowing a viewer to purchase products shown in an entertainment program comprising the steps of:

storing product information relating to a product shown in the entertainment program;

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receiving from the viewer a request about the product shown in the entertainment program, the request containing a subset of the product information;

identifying the stored product information using the subset of the product information; and

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communicating to the viewer the identified

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information about the product.

9.   The method according to claim 8, further comprising the step of:

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          placing an order with a vendor for the product.

10.   The method according to claim 8, wherein the step of identifying includes the step of:

          performing a search using a database search engine.

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11.   The method according to claim 8, wherein the step of receiving the request includes the step of:

          providing to the database the subset of product information through an operator terminal.

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12.   The method according to claim 11, wherein the step of receiving the request further comprises the step of:

          interactively providing to the viewer information about the product.

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13.   The method according to claim 8, further comprising the step of:

          receiving information about products shown in an entertainment program.

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14.   The method according to claim 13, wherein the step of

receiving the product information includes the step of:

receiving the product information from a remote location.

5   15. The method of claim 8, wherein the step of storing includes the step of:

storing entertainment program information identifying a particular entertainment program in which a product was shown.

10   16. The method of claim 15, wherein the step of storing entertainment program information includes the step of:

storing information about characters and a plot of the entertainment program.

15   17. The method of claim 8, wherein the step of storing includes the step of:

storing information identifying a portion of the entertainment program in which the product is shown.

20   18. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of storing information identifying a portion of the entertainment program includes the step of:

storing a count value that corresponds to the time the product was shown in the entertainment program.

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19. A terminal, coupled to a central controller, to enter

product data into the central controller system that allows a viewer to purchase products shown in an entertainment program, the terminal comprising:

means for entering product information relating to a

5 product used in the entertainment program, wherein the product information includes information identifying how the product was used in the program;

a local database storing the entered product information; and

10 means for transmitting to the central controller the product information stored in the local database.

20. A method for entering product data and transmitting the product data to a central controller which allows a viewer to

15 purchase products shown in an entertainment program, comprising the steps of:

entering product information relating to a product used in the entertainment program, wherein the product information includes information identifying how the product was

20 used in the program;

storing the entered product information; and

transmitting the stored product information to the central controller.

25 21. The method of claim 20, wherein the step of transmitting comprises the step of:

remotely transmitting the stored product information to the central controller.

22. An operator terminal for accessing information about a product corresponding to a prop used in an entertainment program, and for use with in a central facility having a database and an interface unit to receive calls, the operator terminal comprising:

means for receiving a request about a product shown in the entertainment program;

means for transmitting a query to the database relating to the request; and

means for receiving from the database product information about the product identified in the request.

23. The operator terminal according to claim 22, wherein the means for receiving the request includes:

means for receiving an identification of the entertainment program in which the product was shown.

24. The operator terminal according to claim 22, wherein the means for receiving the request includes:

a telephone connection between the viewer and an operator at the operator terminal.

25. The operator terminal according to claim 22, further

comprising:

means for conveying the received product information to the viewer.

5 26. The operator terminal according to claim 22, further comprising:

an interactive voice response unit including a voice prompt system.

10 27. The operator terminal according to claim 22, wherein:

the request is received from the interface unit.

28. A method for accessing, through an operator terminal located in a central facility, information about a product shown

15 in an entertainment program, comprising the steps of:

receiving from an entertainment program viewer a request about a product shown in the entertainment program;

transmitting a query relating to the request; and

receiving product information about the product

20 identified in the request.

29. The method according to claim 28, wherein the step of receiving a request includes the step of:

receiving a request through a telephone connection

25 between the viewer and an operator at the operator terminal.

30. The method according to claim 28, further comprising the step of:

conveying the received product information to the viewer.

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31. The method according to claim 28, wherein the step of receiving the request includes the step of:

receiving information about the entertainment program and information about the product.

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32. The method according to claim 28, further comprising the steps of:

providing information about products shown in the entertainment program,

15   asking the viewer a series of questions to identify the particular entertainment program, and

transmitting requests received from viewers to an operator at the operator terminal.

20 33. A system for allowing entertainment program viewers to purchase products shown in an entertainment program comprising:

a remote terminal for entering product data about a product used in the entertainment program;

a central controller, coupled to the remote terminal,

25 for receiving and storing the entered product data from the remote terminal; and

an operator terminal, coupled to the central controller, for accessing from the central controller information about the product used in the entertainment program.

5   34.   The system according to claim 33., wherein the remote terminal includes:

means for entering product information relating to the product used in the entertainment program, wherein the product information includes information identifying how the product was

10   used in the program;

a local database storing the entered product information; and

means for transmitting to the central controller the product information stored in the local database.

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35.   The system according to claim 33, wherein the central controller includes:

means for storing in a database product information relating to the product shown in the entertainment program;

20   .   means for receiving from the viewer a request about the product shown in the entertainment program, the request containing a subset of the product information;

means for identifying the product information in the database using the subset of the product information; and

25   means for sending to the viewer the identified information about the product.

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36. The system according to claim 33, wherein the operator terminal includes:

an interface to receive calls;

5   means for receiving from the interface unit a request about a product shown in the entertainment program;

means for remotely transmitting a query to the central controller relating to the request; and

means for receiving from the central controller
10   product information about the product identified in the request.

C6   37. A method for allowing entertainment program viewers to purchase products shown in an entertainment program, comprising the steps of:

15   entering product data about a product used in the entertainment program;

receiving the entered product data;

storing the entered product data in a central database; and

20   .   accessing from the database information about the product used in the entertainment program.

38. The method according to claim 37, wherein the step of entering product data includes the substeps of:

25   entering product information relating to the product shown in the entertainment program, wherein the product

information includes information identifying how the product was used in the program;

storing the entered product information in a local database; and

5 remotely transmitting the product information stored in the local database to the central database.

39. The method according to claim 37, further comprising the steps of:

10 receiving from the viewer a request about the product shown in the entertainment program, the request containing a subset of the product information;

identifying the product information in the database using the subset of the product information; and

15 sending to the viewer the identified information about the product.

40. The method according to claim 37, wherein the step of accessing includes the substeps of:

20 receiving a request from an entertainment program viewer about a product shown in the entertainment program;

remotely transmitting a query relating to the request; and

receiving product information about the product

25 identified in the request.